

## DOWNTOWN SUBCOMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 29, 2005

The meeting was opened by staff members Al Salzman and Tom Higgins, who welcomed all the attendees. After some introductions and points clarified, Mr. Mueller explained the agenda for the night's meeting. Staff explained where the subcommittee was in terms of the planning process and benchmarked how far this committee was when compared with the other committees.

There was much discussion on what "types" of industrial uses would be tolerable Downtown and what would be encouraged. The Industrial Land Use criteria exercise was completed with the following results:

### Industrial

- Need clear definition/policy/guidelines/standards for industrial use
  - Supported the idea of – Cottage Industry or "Specialty use"
- Scale/size being functional in the Downtown
  - Not overwhelming in size
- Limit truck traffic and vehicle impacts
- Industrial uses will be:
  - Environmentally appropriate
  - No excessive fuel storage, chemical storage
- Limited emissions – noise/smell/smoke
- Local impact as a test of appropriateness for an industrial use
  - Do they sell to downtown residents, employees, community folks or regionally?
- Need to develop incentives to remain or relocate to Downtown
  - Use as an opportunity to change use/zoning
- Signage
- Disincentives to limit more industrial use Downtown
- Match scale to Downtown
- Mixed use – retail associated
- Discourage repetitive uses while encouraging variety and complimentary uses

With the Industrial Section completed, it was then appropriate to move on to the Land Use Designation Exercise. However, the exercise from the September 22, 2005 meeting was not completed regarding the Parks and Recreation section and needed to be revisited by this group. There was a great deal of insight, support and understanding on how Parks and Recreation can and should be used as a buffer and transition zone between land uses.

With all the land use criteria developed by the subcommittee, the group was then able to physically locate all of the designated land uses: Residential, Commercial, Institutional, Parks and Recreation and Industrial on a working map. An ortho photographic map of Downtown was used to locate the land uses.

There was some discussion on what all the exercises would lead to in terms of the Comprehensive Plan. It was then discussed that included in all their packets were ten (10) policy ideas with supporting points and one implementation activity bullet. The assignment here was to review the presented draft policies and implementation activities, which were developed from the subcommittee's work, and determine if the policies were moving in the correct direction.

Below are the draft policies and implementation activities the subcommittee has been asked to review and comment on before the next meeting.

### Policy Issues for the Downtown Sub Committee DRAFT REPORT FOR 09/29/05

Westfield's Downtown Subcommittee has developed the following general policies for the Town of Westfield's new Comprehensive Plan:

1. The location of Downtown has been determined to be Hoover Street on the north, South Street on the South, Maple Street on the west and Gurley Street on the east.
2. As use and reuse occurs in the Downtown, adequate parking will be provided.
  - a. All available parking (public and private) will be identified for use.
3. Traffic patterns within the Downtown will facilitate the area as a destination rather than a pass through.
  - a. Easy access for all levels of transportation with a focus on automobile traffic and limiting heavy trucks.
    1. Encourage the routing of heavy trucks away from Downtown.
    - b. Accessibility to Downtown will be encouraged along the thoroughfares.
4. The land uses within the Downtown will be complementary in nature.
  - a. A responsibility for safety will be incorporated into all new construction and adaptive reuse of facilities.
    - b. More retail
    - c. More business in general
5. Physical Amenities will be a visually and physically appealing.
  - a. Develop architectural guidelines for structures to accommodate a range of development styles while providing context-sensitive design
  - b. Incorporate design themes into public infrastructure, "branding"
6. Downtown will assist in producing an image, for commerce within the Town of Westfield.
  - a. Develop a symbol or brand for the Downtown
7. Development and operations effecting the Downtown will be in cooperation with the Town's policies.
  - a. Current and future policies will be developed in cooperation with all parties
8. Overall Downtown design will facilitate mixed uses in terms of commerce and residential.
  - a. Abutting and adjacent land uses will encourage pedestrian traffic.
  - b. Zoning ordinance will encourage a mix of land uses.
  - c. Architectural standards including building materials will balance "Downtown" with functionality
9. Development/Approval issues
  - a. All approvals needed for the Downtown will be clearly identified, defined and the processes available.
  - b. Current approval processes will be reviewed for appropriateness for Downtown development; consideration will be given to Downtown-specific review and approval processes.
10. Transitional uses between Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods:
  - a. Buffering standards will encourage mixed uses, based on the commerce in existence, potential development and the image of the Town of Westfield.
- i. Zoning within the Downtown and abutting property will encourage commerce residential and Downtown as a destination.
  - b. Compatibility and seamless transition between core Downtown and periphery Downtown.
11. Implementation activities:

Parking study  
Traffic study  
Special zoning  
Capitol Improvement Programs

- a. Infrastructure capacity studies
- b. Cost benefit analysis for redirecting heavy truck traffic out of Downtown
- c. Developing a “brand”
- d. Evaluate and determine the use of the Redevelopment Commission as a development tool
- i. One stop approval
- e. Development of guidelines and zoning ordinances for Downtown

There was also some discussion about the final report for the Steering Committee and how and whom should present the document to the Steering Committee. This will need to be finalized at the next meeting.

An open forum followed between participants on the future of the Downtown Committee. It was agreed upon that the Committee would continue well beyond its' current charge of the downtown subcommittee for the Comprehensive Plan and work on implementation issues.

The meeting adjourned and the next meeting was schedule for October 6, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall.